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ABSTRACT

Data concerning school counselor credibility often emphasize shortcomings rather than achievements; counselors who support students' self-exploration may be evaluated less favorably than counselors who make decisions for the students. Two theoretical approaches to school counseling are the guidance of student personnel services approach and the counseling psychotherapeutic approach. If credibility data are collected according to the criteria of the guidance orientation, but counselors employ a psychotherapeutic approach, the results become meaningless. Yet these results are often used for decisions concerning the support for counseling. Counselors, overwhelmed by the scope of their field, may seek panaceas and resort to fads as the answer. In reality, better communication is needed between counselors and their boards of control. Future counselors must be trained not only in educational psychology, developmental psychology, and counseling techniques, but also in philosophy, humanities, and community study and assessment. To help students become self-directing, creative persons, counselors must contribute to the development of curriculum materials and join with teachers in observing and recording the experiences that support active creativeness in students. (NRB)

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THE COUNSELOR OF THE FUTURE--SOME INDICATORS

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One way of looking at the data concerning counselor's credibility gives us the impression that our ratings are less than acceptable, less than what they should be. Another perspective could tell us something of the enormity of work achieved, considering the relative new work called school counseling.

In a 1974 study of the Evaluation of the Role and Function of the Guidance Counselor in the State of New York, The State Department in their Performance Review Report made some statements that should be considered soberly by all of us.

> "Guidance counseling as currently performed is substantially ineffective: Counselors do not appear to exercise a marked influence on student decisions with respect to choice of occupation or post-secondary education.
>
> Two of every five parents surveyed felt that guidance counselors had little effect on their childrens' development.
>
> Changing a class schedule was the only activity for which a majority of surveyed parents and students said they had received counselors' assistance.
>
> Nearly one out of every four counselors surveyed was unsure if counselors themselves understood their role."

(NOTE: In the study 51% of the counselors had more than 350 students each.)

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The report indicated that the School Board would "define the role and functions of guidance counselors...involve parents, teachers and students in an annual review of guidance program effectiveness."[1]

It may be that we have accepted tasks that are impossible to achieve, given the present circumstances. In making an effort, now we are being down-graded for what is not achieved (rated against some utopian ideal) rather than being known for what we do in fact accomplish. Perhaps we have not been able to articulate the accomplishments -- partially under our confidentiality ethic. Public fears, and an overwhelming sense of problems may find the counselor visible and an easy scapegoat.

We need caution, voiced assertiveness, in making inferences about this data and need to take an active part in helping others to exercise the same cautions. Administrators, boards, publics if they make the decisions for us, not with us, we have lost the opportunity to become professionals.

Factors that should lend themselves to cautiousness are:

1. The most significant positive for counselors is a report from a student, "He/she did not help me, I did it myself." Yet these accomplishments of supporting self-direction do not show up positively on evaluative feedback procedures. (I remember how hard it was to enable parents to see this with their college son. They had spent an enormous sum for a private company to tell the son. That didn't work, but they thought I should decide, pigeon hole him...thus solve all his problems. Finally, when they saw the damage of deciding for youth, they were most appreciative of my work. That was one, the majority of parents would still be lacking this insight.)

2. Without help in seeing the inherent dangers, students and their parents will likely be with the "he/she did it for me" group. Thus, in effect, we will be contributing to making students more passive, more dependent, and at the same time, be getting good "brownie points." This dependency-independency challenge can be analogous to the doctor giving tranquilizers and in so doing be covering up the underlying causes and developments of the illness. The patient, or the student, is made to feel euphoric while all the time the difficulties are only masked. It is possible that counselors may find themselves in the "masking" business in order to secure credibility points in order that he/she may have a measure of job security.

3. We need to observe that all these accountability efforts have no base line against which to judge improvement. Nor are there criteria for judging. By inference, we assume the stem questions of the evaluative instruments represent the criteria, or at least the counselor's job description. If they do <u>not</u>, we are in grave difficulty. If we do, we are also in difficulty.

<u>Reacting to Accountability Studies</u>

One category of difficulties resides in our reacting to, seeking to give people what they want. Being responsive to public concerns is important, but having these expressions be the program has a built-in self-defeating dynamic, for we find ourselves in the technician's role and further and further away from developing into responsible professionals.

Building a line of action to increase our credibility -- our accountability scores -- is fraught with all kinds of "sandtraps." One significant trap was expressed by Don T. Campell, former president of APA, when he said he could not trust the honesty of responses. (He was talking of adult peer evaluations.) He voiced his disillusionment with current evaluation practices for he indicated that man is caught in protecting personal security interests, jobs, advancement to the extent that evaluation feedback cannot be relied upon.[2] If this kind of data as purely feedback is unreliable, to use it for administrative decision-making compounds the distortions and distructive effects.

Called-For Responses to Challenges

However we view our state of credibility, we can say it is less than ideal and as professionals we are challenged to give solid thought, research, leadership in ways that will develop and merit public confidence. Just reacting, being a presider, or a facilitator of public pressures is not enough. It may be reinforcing the superficial -- like giving more and more candy to satisfy children's whims when, in fact, good nutrition is called for.

Directly seeking credibility may be defeating, counterproductive for public trust and confidence as a by-product -- a by-product of significant professional work -- adequately interpreted.

We need as counselors, counselor educators, to discern deeply and to bring to bear all we know about learning-teaching. We are called to take into consideration the history, all the advances so far, and discern what the challenges of today call for. And all of this needs to be within philosophical conceptualizations that give purpose and direction to our endeavors.[3]

It seems that we will either become entrenched as technicians or will envision and carry out new conceptualizations of our work.

The new envisionments hopefully will, in part, emerge from experiences of the past. A synthesis -- and more is called for. To fuse two or more different approaches, by compromise, may result in patchwork with no inherent energy to encompass and vitalize the new procedures.

Elements From the Past

As we look back, we see two basic theoretical approaches to the counseling and guidance work. One, the guidance, student personnel (services) work, the other the counseling psychotherapeutic emphasis. I have a judgment that the data concerning credibility were collected under the rationale of the guidance services orientation; while, in effect, some counselors were seeking to work within the psychotherapeutic rationale. If so, this makes the results sought after virtually meaningless, and yet this information is being used for decisions concerning the support, or lack of same, for our work.

Other means of relating to the public, to our administrators, boards, must be found and developed. Even more importantly we need to develop, firm up, re-interpret our work -- sometimes called the "counselor's role." To make the future grow out of the past, with a keen discernment of the "as is" a clear vision of the possibilities is called for.

The Services Approach

The services approach has made a giant impact on keeping education sensitized to the individual needs of all students and has sought to hold on to the personal contacts in the midst of large classes, mass production

procedures. Many of the human touch factors of education have been lost with bigness; hence schools have sought to provide some of the personal supports by creating "adjunct services"; -- services along side of the central programs provided by the schools. In this framework we are working as if outside the main stream, and yet, at least in our idealism, we talk of helping the child, all children, develop as "whole persons." Even superficially we can note that there are inconsistencies, built-in limitations to the accomplishment of expressed goals, nevertheless, we have made strides in understanding and providing for individual differences.

The Psychotherapeutic Approach

On the other hand, the psychotherapeutic stream also has difficulties. These practitioners, while buying into educating the "whole child" have, to a large degree, focused on the emotions as if they are separate entities that could be worked with separately. They have carried the "you feel" to the absurd extreme. A colleague will say "you feel frustrated, angry" without the slightest attention to what one feels frustrated, angry about. Fydor Dostoevsky told us that when we focus on emotions alone, we quickly come full circle. On more careful analysis, I found that this "you feel" can be a very powerful strategy of protecting oneself from dealing with a specific situation and is effective "stonewalling" -- all under the guise of being highly professional. It is seeking "power over", not dialoguing with.

I do not wish to be misunderstood, for I have spent much of my professional life seeking to grow within Rogerian counseling theory. Probably because it has so much promise that we have over-endorsed, over-used it as a technique. It has become a technique-mode of everyday relating, of teaching; when in fact the approach is definitely not to be a manipulative technique.

Along with what help the Rogerian theory, or philosophy has given us for our own personal-professional growth, we need to be aware of the misuses that plague us.

Immature counselors do use the reflective "you feel" as technique. A supposedly retarded adolescent girl said of her non-directive counselor -- using all the right words and silences -- "He was just a play-like doctor." Because of the demands for counselors we have educated large numbers of counselors who may be in the "play-like" category.

And, deserved or not, we do have in some instances, a poor public image. We are unable to screen effectively. Get an administrator, parent off privately, and they may say -- "the counselors, well, they are too 'kooky' themselves to merit my trust for my children." The confidence of the clients, as in medicine and all helping-healing professions, is, we know, an important influence in effecting change.

There is another limitation, perhaps a deeper one, concerning the practices, the outcomes, that is sufficiently prevalent to give us pause as we consider the shortcomings, the possible non-helpful outcomes of the Rogerian theory. The focus is on the individual, his/her happiness. Theoretically, the optimum individual functioning will lead to constructive interpersonal outcomes; however, what we frequently observe is an augmentation of privitism, even narcissism,[4] not community.[5] From my observations, there is far too much of husband or wife "finding himself/herself" while at the same time continuing to ignore their responsibilities of providing loving relationships for their small children.

If the theory still holds up, something is wrong with the practitioners. The observation of outcomes raises questions that need to be addressed if our credibility is to serve as well -- that is, if good interpersonal relationships are essential. And if a sharing in community is important, why are outcomes frequently not in harmony with theory?

The Rogerian theory is a major psychotherapeutic approach; however, behavior modification is another school of thought. It has pitfalls (as well as strengths) of its own -- especially when used with children who cannot be expected to choose freely and voice what behaviors they wish to have changed.

All of us are calling for meaningful relationships, for a belonging in community, still there is an uneasy sense that the service approach, the "you feel", nor the reward, reinforcement ways of "helping" -- that none of these speak directly to the over-riding need, nor is community, nor dialogue being facilitated nor are they observable by-products.

The Age of Panacea Seeking of Pseudo Therapies or Gimmicks

Another basic present-day challenge is, "Are we as counselors addressing ourselves to such great needs that we are overwhelmed, and thus may in good faith, seek panaceas that are counter-productive? We have resorted with increasing momentum to fads, super-imposed as the answer. Each movement, no doubt, has some bit of insight to add to the helping professions, yet in the hands of professionally immature counselors these innovations become a recipe, a cure-all, a gimmick of the quack-medicineman variety.[6] We, in counselor education, have, in some instances, been responsible for this fadism in the public schools.

Some graduate schools have let the hard discipline of scholarship, philosophy, humanities, behavioral sciences, the study of societies be crowded out with the gamut, one-after-another, of sensitivity activities. TA, primal scream assertativeness training, etc., etc. Each is supposed to be the answer. Seldom do we hear persons on the workshop circuits talking of the limitations, the possible determinal effects, as well as the promises of their particular all inclusive answer. Graduate students feel important, powerful, skillful, yet these approaches are worthless, even dangerous without underpinnings of substantive knowledge and ways of assessing, judging outcomes against justifiable societal, personal goals.

All these various panaceas I realize are designed in counselor training to develop the counselor's own sensitivities. But unless these activities demonstrate effectiveness in the real cauldron of human suffering, we are still in the "play-like" arena. Counselor educators have been remiss in certifying persons who, when asked about building a program, will say I would put in some group work on assertativeness training, etc., without any evidence of educational goals to be accomplished.

The recent parade of therapies talk about skills as if they are means without ends, or means and ends together. Ends are to come automatically, no questions asked. We hug our theories as if they were immutable truths. David Bakan has indicated that considering means without ends is indeed idolatrous.[7] We in counselor preparation are dangerously close to this state.

For we have made remarkable strides in an educational system forced by numbers to be impersonal with children. Yet somewhere we need to be able to put our finger on our contributions, and interpret in the concrete,

(not just talking theories, nor violating confidentiality) to our publics and to our boards of control. What is called for now are graduate programs producing professionals who can really make a difference in how children learn -- in all aspects of their lives. Programs that can make differences justify their work in solid philosophical dimensions and, at the same time, interpret the work to laymen in laymen's language are called for.

Results: We Are Suspect

Significantly, we as counselors, counselor educators, (whatever our theoretical orientations may be), have not been in communication with our boards of control. On the one hand counselors have sought to please the principal with all the work such as scheduling, but when the criticisms come from the outside, the principals do not justify us in that work. At a recent meeting of school counselors from over the state, when queried about how the school boards viewed their work, there was total silence, I expect counselors have left the interpretation up to their administrators.

On the one hand the board holds our futures in their hands, yet all too frequently, counselors have secretly, or somewhat openly, identified with the counter-culture influences. This is one way to insure that we shall continue to be in jeapordy.

Administrators, board members, are people too, even though relating from a power base which is thought to be in contradiction to the warm, open relating that counselors espouse. Still we cannot be selective in our caring, our warmth, or seeking to understand. This separation needs to be bridged by dialogue, by allowing board members to experience first hand

that we can in fact understand and appreciate. Neglecting the "bridgeing" puts us in the midst of disintegrative conflicts. Instead of interpreting our work in theoretical formulations, or by summaries of head counts, our challenge is to convey the "heart beats" of persons to the board members. With fictitious names, disguised circumstances, we can share with board members as: "Today I worked with Billy Doe" -- give presenting situation, indicated needs, and the plan of help. Or, "Last month -- give the presenting situation and changes experienced in the student. Board members can then say, -- "If only I had had such help!"

POINTING A WAY INTO THE FUTURE

Clearly discerning our advances, our pitfalls, and the educational challenges of the present, we can then delineate some important aspects of the counselor's work for the future, and make the future grow out of our past achievements.

Recommendations

Some of the dimensions of this envisioned worker's functions (whether working directly with the students, as a teacher's colleague, or as a consultant) should be:

1. tapping and nurturing the creative in each child. (Emerson talked of life that is "a copy of" as equivalent to suicide.)
2. enabling the child to be an active learner, not just a passive reactor. Be self-directing, choosing.
3. support the positive outcomes of play.
4. learn effective coping with frustrations, impulse control.
5. develop strength of internal motivation for mastery.

The dimensions will be achieved through use of all the advancements in developmental psychology that are being made. And somehow we need to play a part in designing curricular materials using the constructs of cognitive developmental psychology. As yet undemonstrated is how to work with the "whole child" and keep the cognitive and emotional and actions all in one piece. For example, working with feelings alone may contribute to fragmentation of persons.

This counselor, learning specialist will not only be helpful in knowing how a child learns best, but also in knowing how to plan the curricular materials. Selecting what a child is to learn -- this is the hard challenge! We have a start in the area of values, but just clarifying what a child comes with is insufficient. With the separation of church and state issue, we have abdicted all to the separation, and neither church nor state are reaching the children with substance. In a sense Charles MacGruder reflects our total picture when he said, "Somewhere between college and Watergate I lost my moral compass." We now, in the next generation, may not realize the loss of having had a compass to begin with.

Then, too, with our increasing awareness of cultural pluralism, our cultures are being lost under the mistaken idea that we are respecting other cultures. We may not be respecting, but be abdicating to a void, a "non-cultural" society.

We in our present day society have a mistaken idea that talking about values is in fact the value. Philip Phenix stated our challenge when he indicated the "values inhere in the consummation."[8] We hug our theories as if the verbalizations were the reality, when, in fact, reality must be the lives experienced, lived.

Probably the person who gives leadership in these dimensions should have a new name in order to distinguish the professional from the paraprofessionals -- identify the true functions of the learning specialist I am envisioning. The word "counselor" has been given away to the paraprofessionals, to the non-educational, non-mental health workers to the extent that the word is virtually meaningless.

What I am calling for is an expert, supporting, making possible the deeper dimensions of student's learning, not primarily the learning remediation, functions. The name might be Educational Psychologist, or Learning Specialist.

Academic Preparation

Two additional areas of preparation are indicated along with the work in educational psychology, developmental psychology, counseling preparation. We will need firm under-pinnings in Humanities, Philosophy. Some of the current developments are reported to be philosophies with virtually no awareness of the wisdom, the great streams of philosophical thought and inquiry. It is like trying to invent the wheel totally oblivious of all the advancements of our heritage at our disposal.

Another area of expertise will be in that of community study and assessment. Each community, each classroom, is an influential social system. Teachers, all workers with children, need to be aware of the particular dynamics of each system, of what are the unique (as well as the more general) strengths, the factors producing the insecurities.

Personal Attributes and Preparation

Finally the personal adequacy of the professional is of primary importance. Living effectively ourselves is called for and is the key for our credibility ratings. Carkhuff indicated that "only the fully functioning whole person has a right to be a helper." Becoming whole together (counselor and student) with reference to, for example in alcohol and drug counseling, is not appropriate for the public school helper. Carkhuff summarized, "If helping is not a way of life, then it is a game. In this view (aside from superficial behaviors) helping is irrelevant or destructive insofar as it reinforces the notion that the successful life is the one which you technique best: it becomes just one of many selfish and cruel manipulations."[9]

A Beginning

There is a need to take theories, our philosophical constructs, one step further -- tie them to a particular point of reference -- as a classroom. If this specific connection is not made, professionals will find ourselves turning back upon ourselves, using theory to critique theory. This readily becomes useless or even dangerous for practitioners -- dangerous if, when asked about effectiveness, the counselor gives a reiteration of the theory, blindly believing it is in effect doing what it purports to do -- ignoring outcomes that do not fit the theory.

At the same time we need to be theory builders. With "fresh opened" minds, there is a need to build new hypotheses -- new modes of effecting results. The history of the development of school counseling as a profession indicates that we have largely borrowed theory and practices from the various psychotherapies. To become a mature profession on our own we need to

begin to take the inductive look. Assuming that the enabling of students to become active, self-directing, creative persons is a major goal of our educational endeavors, counselors joining with teachers should begin to look, see, observe, record the experiences that draw out and support the active creativeness in students. In this process counselors may also find significant dimension to the unique contributions for prevention and for the therapeutic interventions school counselors seek to provide.

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4. Freedman, Jonathan, Happy People, Clinical Psychologist. Columbia University. I read a review in a recent Denver Post.

5. Ogawa, Dennis M. Kodoma no Tame ni (For the Sake of the Children). Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978. "We all want and need a greater sense of community, yet we spend our lives resisting and because we've fallen blindly alone with the converse, mobility, and privacy...We are moving to the opposite extreme of isolation and insensitivity toward others."

6. Fletcher, F. M. Director of the Doctoral Program for Counseling Psychologists talked while on the University of Northern Colorado campus February, 1977, about the dangers of recipe courses -- fads, cure alls -- one answer good for everybody. He made his position clear that there was urgent need for assessment of outcomes.

7. Bakan, Donald. The following statement was used by Karl Menninger in Whatever Became of Sin and was confirmed in a personal letter to author. "In both science and religion there is the assumption that the fundamental reality is that which is beyond the manifest -- the huge world of the unmanifest. If at any stage of development we begin to worship the manifest, or the means whereby we have made some part manifest, then indeed can it be said that we are being idolatrous."

8. Phenix, Philip H. Man and His Becoming. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964, p. 85.

9. Carkhuff, Robert R. Beyond Counseling and Therapy. p. 247.